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Take a hike!
Explore the Alven Ferguson Trail
on pg. 2

Sleigh the winter
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Highlands on pg. 4

Creative colours
Using art to connect with our world
on pg. 7



The Redwing Frond towers over the snowy trails of the Sculpture Forest in winter. Created by artist Darlene Bolahood, the piece adds a colourful kick to the earthy hike. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

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The Alven Ferguson Trail

RICK WHITTEKER

County Life Contributor

Algonquin Highlands gets a gold star for their network of trails available to both hikers and snowshoers. Part of their trail system includes a network of backcountry trails including the Ridge Trail, Circuit of Five Viewpoints and the Crests of Kennisis. These trails link, loop and branch off giving backcountry enthusiasts plenty of options. I decided to just dip a toe into this network by doing the Alven Ferguson Trail to the Ridge Trail and back.

A testament to the value Algonquin Highlands puts on their trail system, there is a fully plowed parking area near the trailhead which includes a large, colourful trail map. Located at the end of McPhail Road off North Shore Road, the trailhead is a short walk from the parking area.

I have no regrets picking a cold, sunny winter day for this snowshoe hike, in fact, I prefer it. I just love how the clean, crisp air reaches deep into my lungs as I travel slowly through this forest trail - for me, this is spirit lifting! With due respect to my friends and family that prefer the heat of the south, moving through nature under your own effort in the winter and feeling the warmth spread from your core, outwards is a very gratifying experience.

The topography of the Alven Ferguson Trail helps by climbing uphill from the trailhead, snowshoes crunching underfoot with the effort. Periodic breathers encourage reflective moments. The mental clarity that results from the cold, fresh air helps bring into focus the small details like the play of light and shadows on the smooth, creamy surfaces and the colours of lichens and mosses on rocky outcrops draped in a white shawl.



The T-Junction signpost at the Alven Ferguson Trail in Algonquin Highlands. /RICK WHITTEKER

The trail twists and turns, drops and climbs through different treed habitats including hardwood forests and dense hemlock stands. Looking for evidence of wildlife, the playful tracks near the trail suggest some free roaming dog visits. I can almost see the tongue hanging to the side and tail wagging! Recognizing that most wildlife has little capacity for the playful energy of dogs in their knife edged winter survival, wildlife normally create tracks that are in a straight line, a focused trajectory and an economy of movement.

A belly dragging mink track moves along one of the many wet watercourses near the trail. The bounding tracks of pine marten was also seen crossing the trail. The body print in the soft snow would match the size and weight of the diminutive marten. Well known for their acrobatic climbing ability, martens will spend time on the ground in the winter rooting out voles, rabbits and squirrels from their underground shelters.

Evidence of subnivean life can be seen by the hoar frost forming along the vertical edges of holes near logs and other forest debris. The moisture rising from small mammal respiration meets the frigid, dry air. Looking like scales, needles, fans and feathers, the distinct design of hoar frost gives a hint of the life below the surface.

The Alven Ferguson Trail eventually meets the Ridge Trail, I turn right here looking to explore some wetlands beside the Ridge Trail to the north. Along this section, I hear the rattling of the bleached-brown leaves of American beech saplings in the breeze. They hold on to their leaves throughout the winter, a process called marcescence (Mar-sassins).

Both beech and oak, another leaf cling-on tree, like dry, infertile sites where they can outcompete other tree species. The thinking is that by keeping their leaves through the winter, they are conserving moisture by shading the forest floor in early spring. The leaves also trap more snow adding moisture to the area near the tree where it is needed. Furthermore, leaves don't fall until the spring, adding valuable compost and mulch during peak growing season.

I find myself cheering on these juvenile trees as their parents die off from the ubiquitous beech bark disease. I secretly hope that, before they die, chemical messages are being sent by the mother trees through the mycorrhizal fungal network that might help their offspring fight off the ravages of this disease.



A beech tree with leaves on the trail.

It is time to turn back and although there are familiar observations on the way back to the trailhead, moving in the opposite direction does lead to some different views. I can't help but smile as a deer fawn must have walked the trail since I passed, its delicate little hoof-prints imprinted in the trail hardpacked snow.

This out and back route gives the snowshoer choice to the distance they would like to travel and trail markers and signposts provide a sense of confidence in location. The Alven Ferguson trail is a short foray into the backcountry, offering a glimpse into the potential backcountry options of the Algonquin Highlands.

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Community Living Contemplations

TERESA JORDAN

County Life Contributor

I am so pleased to have the opportunity to hold space in this *County Life*. The idea here is to share highlights of our work at Community Living Trent Highlands in Haliburton, share stories of people and for me to share some of my contemplations as I do this work, wander this life, notice the magic, and amazing moments all around. I have been working for Community Living since 2003 and have been part of the Haliburton team since 2013. I was accused by a colleague recently of having a deep bias for Haliburton and that would be true. I am the Executive Director of CLTH, deeply passionate about our mission to work to make great things happen in the community and to be part of the creation of a community where everyone is deeply valued and connected. I guess that is part of my love of Haliburton, I know that the people that we serve here have deep connections, and important roles in this community. That all are seen as neighbours and part of the tapestry that is this rich community.

I began my career at Christian Horizons, a similar support agency, now called Karis Disability Services. I began my career at a community home in Columbus, not Ohio, but just outside Oshawa. In 2003 I had an opportunity to work for Community Living in



Kawartha Lakes at a community home there. Both at Karis and CL I took opportunities that were offered and worked to add to my education with the idea that I wanted to take on leadership roles in the field. I became a manager in 2005 and the Executive Director in Kawartha Lakes in 2011. I love my job. On the first

Friday of my new role as ED in 2011, I put out what I called the *Friday Update* and I have maintained a commitment to writing, musing, informing and storytelling each and every week since that

time. I like to pass on to my teams that this is what happens when an English major gets a job in the social service sector. I use my writing as a tool in my day to day, to help me sort through all that is going on, see opportunities and of course to try to do better as I know better. As I have grown and learned into my role at CLTH I have taken on challenges and roles in the broader region and province, I am passionate about the sector that we work in and about inclusion for everyone. It is important to me that while I feel I can have an impact in these broader arenas, that I am also deeply connected to the communities and teams of CLTH and can be relied on to be working hard for the people and families of our communities. I am inspired by all the people that I work to help serve, that I work alongside in the CLTH teams and partner agencies. It is not hard to find material to contemplate, it is all around, all the time as I travel the roads and places of all three communities. Once you build your life around the idea that you will have something to share each week, you notice things in all kinds of places. I love the word “sojourn,” as I feel it is so descriptive for the kind of path we are all on, seeking, learning, growing, serving, connecting, and resting in joyful moments.

So that is me, the author and contemplator of our little corner.



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A winter trip

KATE BUTLER

County Life Contributor

Winter is a season which can make us look down. Now, I don't mean that in an emotional sense or even in some sort of metaphorical way, but quite literally. We keep our eyes on our boots watching for patches of ice and puddles of slush. We tilt our heads down to protect our faces from gusty winds and snuggle our necks deeply into jackets and scarves, while scurrying from place to place. Some winter days, however, a kind of magic happens. The sky is a brilliant blue and the sun pops out to share a warmth that gives us a hint of the seasons to come. On such a winter's day, we can take the time to take in our surroundings with fresh eyes and imagine what life would have been like in our community many winters ago.

For anyone who travelled into town, the journey would have been rather different from what we're used to today. One of my favourite historic winter photos of Haliburton actually shows the approach to the village along Highland Street. At first glance, the photo completely disorients you because of the sheer volume of snow and seeming lack of landmarks. A little closer examination reveals a frozen Head Lake to the left and a snow covered street to the right. Today, we're used to our frozen lakes being highways for snowmobiles, but many years ago, they served as highways for all residents in the winter. A sleigh was vital winter transportation, and of course, it was best served by snowy surfaces, not the ploughed roads we're accustomed to today. Trips by sleigh might have been chilly, but when all was working well, they could also be swift and efficient. The arrival of the railway in 1878 revolutionized travel in and out of Haliburton, but that mode of transportation was only effective at this time of year if the tracks were kept clear, as a group of investors learned firsthand not long after opening of the line!

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a trip into town might have been driven by the need for those supplies which even the most resourceful might have



While sleigh rides are used these days as a form of fun rather than necessary transportation, they have a long history of usage in the Haliburton Highlands. /FILE

found challenging to make at home. Perhaps a lamp needed a new chimney or some fabric was needed for a special project. Perhaps they had run out of tea! In addition to picking up supplies, trips into town were also a chance to share information; information which might have been gleaned from the pages of the *Echo*. The Grand Central Hotel would have been a prime spot to do this, as it catered not only to travellers, but also to the local community. Regardless of the season or the time of day, historic photos always seem to reveal a gathering by the Grand Central. While that hotel may not still be standing today, and while it may now be a bit unusual to come into town by sleigh, a winter trip into town for supplies, along with a chance to catch up with friends and the news from the *Echo* actually sounds rather familiar, so perhaps winter in the Highlands hasn't changed that much after all.

If you're curious to find out more about the Grand Central and other buildings from Haliburton's past, make sure to keep your eyes peeled for the Haliburton Highlands Museum's historical walking tours. They'll be back as soon as the warmer weather is too!

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Writing on the Senior Side

Headspace

GAIL STELTER

County Life Contributor

Headspace: that place in our minds where we store all our thoughts, feelings, and internal banter. I can control who and what I will let in. It's not easy, as the world's evil, sadness and darkness often demand entry. I will let them in, but I no longer possess the vigour of my youthful idealism and determination to change them. Living on the senior side had changed my headspace. I want peace but the crazy, dangerous world is growing, and I often feel helpless and frustrated.

In the 1963 book *Strength to Love*, Martin Luther King said, "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." I feel this surrounding me, and it is upsetting. How do I address this ignorance and stupidity? Can I free it from my head space?

February is the month of love and the celebration of love through Valentine's Day. I have decided to use this as my inspiration for exchanging the frustration in my headspace for love. I look again to the words of Martin Luther King:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.

If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.

Love is my ultimate tool for making it through these difficult political times.

Love sets me free to do something. Even as I strive to slow down my senior life and to acutely remember that each day I have left is a gift to open and enjoy, even as I focus on what makes me and my family happy, I still can do my part for love and the world (small things in a great way).

I am working (very hard, I must admit), to keep modern-day dictators out of my head space. I won't listen to them or read about them. I won't acknowledge them or even share jokes about him. I can't control them, but I can control my reactions. I have no room for them in my headspace. Please do not misinterpret this to mean that I don't care. I care too much. It hurts, not just for me but also for the children and grandchildren I will leave behind. I know that my turn to love may not have an impact. I wonder if anyone can have a positive impact right now, and that is both sad and depressing. Will I see goodness prevail? King again says, "We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope." So, I try to keep my disappointment out of my headspace while I search to replace it with infinite hope.

Fill your headspace with positive, happy thoughts and internal banter. Keep talking to yourself and smiling when you do. I hope that you find little ways to spread love and joy. Have a wonderful February of love. Keep your mind and body warm and content.

Here is a short love story in a familiar setting. It is obviously fiction, and you

know the ending. Writing stories is one of my ways of creating and spreading hope. I hope you enjoy it and that you will be glad you let it into your headspace.

Margaret and the Titanic

Margaret had misgivings. Peter convinced her. Her love for him flooded her heart. She felt the promise and excitement of a new life together in a new country.

On April 10, 1912, Margaret and Peter boarded at Southampton. The tickets had been expensive but second class was generally acknowledged to be the same as first class on any other ship. Margaret was pleasantly surprised when Peter told her their stateroom, E43, also served as alternate first-class accommodation. The white-painted oak panels gave the room a welcome brightness. A large sofa promised comfort on the long journey. The outdoor promenade, gracious dining room and well-stocked library were sure to be enjoyed. She anticipated an amazing adventure on the largest ocean liner in the world. They were passengers on the maiden voyage of the RMS Titanic.

They had been at sea for four days when the Titanic struck the iceberg. It happened so quickly. Life jackets. Where were the life jackets? Lifeboats. Why were there only twenty lifeboats? People were shouting. The porters were telling everyone to come on deck. Margaret felt reassured. Ships were on the way to help. There would be time for the twenty lifeboats to ferry back and forth. Everyone would get

to the rescue ships. The musicians played. She could not know the captain had said the Titanic was taking on water too quickly. She could not know the rescue ships were too far away.

The waters of death rushed on. Margaret and Peter, life jackets on, stood in the cold. Peter was determined to get her to safety; to get her to one of the lifeboats. He ran, amid the cries of children and the panic of their parents, to secure her a seat. There were so many women and children. Margaret's heart demanded that the children and their mothers be first. She knew her life was not a priority and a life without Peter was not a life.

Time was collapsing. Margaret heard screams. Was it coming from below; from third class and steerage? Had the death water engulfed them? The Titanic began to tilt. Its nose entered the water. The musicians played. Margaret watched as passengers ran up the incline to a dry place. Peter thought they should jump and try to hold onto a floating object. Perhaps the rescue ship would arrive. She was afraid of the cold ocean; irrationally more fearful of it than of death. She couldn't die this way. What should she do?

A ridiculous question. It didn't matter. She did not jump. They embraced. The water rushed. This wasn't supposed to happen. She wanted to go home to Newcastle. She wanted to hug her parents. She died in Peter's arms. Margaret and Peter were forever in love.



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County Life is produced by The Haliburton County Echo
 and Minden Times, and published by White Pine Media
 Corp. Audited circulation: 6,372 July 1 - Dec 31, 2015



Editorial

Wake up

IT HAPPENS every year.
 Always at the exact same time. I start the winter strong. A feeling of optimism and promise on the snow-crested horizon.

As fat flakes fall near the tail-end of November, laying the groundwork for a white Christmas ahead, I can't help but reflect on the beauty and tranquility of this place we call home.



EMILY STONEHOUSE
 County Life Editor

"Why would anyone ever want to be somewhere where there isn't snow," I would muse, sipping my hot coffee while cinnamon swirls around the steam.

And then it hits me.
 January.

And not just any time in January. No, no. Those first few weeks, I am still blissfully at peace with winter, distracted

by the rush of routines taking shape and the buzz of new busyness falling on the forefront.

And then, like clockwork, by the third week in January, every year, I am done with winter.

Done with the layers of boots and snowpants and crusty mittens that somehow never dry out. Done with scraping off my windshield while my fingers split from dryness.

Done with cold season and flu season and yet another bowl of broth.

I am ready for the sun. Why would anyone ever want to be somewhere where there isn't snow?

I know now.

Because they are quite simply, done.

I think it's natural for these feelings of euphoria to have an expiration date. To be honest, I often feel similar when the lazy days of summer roll around. For those first few weeks, it's magical. The long shadows that stretch late into the night; fireflies and Mourning Doves circling the indigo skies.

It's a beautiful time of year. A time for reflection, for socializing, for spirit and spark and wonder.

But, like all good things, its beauty runs its course.

By early September, I am manifesting autumn energy by layering cable-knit sweaters and spitefully sweating through them every day when that hot summer sun still rises.

Fall is fleeting yet welcome; the shortening days paying tribute to the sweet and salty energy of summer. It's the time where our bodies naturally take note to rest, to welcome a slower pace of life, and to prepare for the pending hibernation season.

As mammals, the winter months carry a natural slowness to them; our desire to sleep and eat and preserve our energy is ingrained in us, whether we admit it or not. Many cultures and countries around

the world practice the mindfulness of rest. It's not seen as a failure, as a break. It's seen as absolutely critical to survive the harsh winter months. No living thing in nature blooms all year, why should we as humans?

I think that's why, every year, at this exact same time, I start to feel done. And not just for the simplicity of saying goodbye to the added physical and mental challenges of winter (though I am very ready to part with the crusty mittens that somehow never dry out.)

This is the time of year that our spirits begin to unfurl. As the sun begins to linger in the sky just a little longer each and every day, our souls become alive. We are eager for a season of rebirth, of renewal, of rejuvenation. Ready for a time of newness and nature and the promise of what's next.

As we enter this next stage of the calendar, mentally preparing ourselves for the fact that there will be several "fake springs" between now and that glorious mucky day that the last snowbank melts into a puddle, I hope we can find energy for the season ahead.

I've always thought that New Year's shouldn't land on just another winter day that happens to restart the Gregorian calendar. Rather, the time for newness should be on the edge of winter to spring, cold to warm, sleep to awake.

There's much to look forward to in the coming months; optimism and promise on the horizon.

Ready for a fresh start.

Top 10 reasons to bring back old style telephones

IAM AS addicted to my cell phone as much as the next person. But I also realize that it takes too much time away from the important things in life — and provide the ability to spread bad information and gives really rotten people a greater voice than they should have.

That's why I would not be too upset if society got all nostalgic and brought back the old rotary dial phones complete with those coiled cords. Here are my top 10 reasons why I think this is a good idea.



STEVE GALEA
 Humour Columnist

1. Screen time would once again mean looking through a bug net in summer.
2. It'd be hell on telemarketers.
3. The police will clearly know if you are on the phone and not using hands-free in your car.
4. So long as the cord is long enough, you'll get good reception everywhere.
5. Butt dialing would take real skill.
6. Text messaging will once again require pens, papers, and pigeons.
7. Running to a phone is what kept most teenagers of my generation in shape.
8. You're probably going to make sure you've got the right phone number before putting all that effort into using the rotary dial.
9. Won't need to buy a new phone every couple of years.
10. The reintroduction of phone booths will also be a habitat creation project for superheroes.

Heartbeats

Forest of reeds, crumpled to straw, cattails' heads,
 shredded to fluff,
 months until the thaw returns the red-winged black-
 birds to their domain, their singing, dormant 'till spring,
 my eyes sliding along the frozen River, sealed
 beneath a ceiling of ice, as I stand on its bank beneath an
 alabaster Sky,

the Sun's light, pale as Snow, as I take slow steps
 towards the River, following the boot prints that came
 before me,

hesitating before I step onto the ice, listening for
 cracks, but all I hear is the heaving of my Breath as I
 leave land behind,

walking onto the frozen River, following the foot-
 steps of others to guide me as I slide over its silenced
 flow,

feeling free as Wind that bashes the reeds, lashes my
 cheeks, tears sprouting in my eyes from the cold,
 glancing back at the bank where a few spindly trees
 stand, the blur of a grey bird landing on the branch of
 one of the trees,

so tiny, I wonder whether it's a chickadee, how
 hearty and brave, unafraid of Wind's rampage,
 as another bird joins it on a lower branch of the bony
 tree, peering out at the frozen River and the bundled
 figure of me,

walking across the ice, taking small steps, wondering
 whether I should slide my way towards the other side,
 or follow the curve of the River, wondering whether
 it remains frozen in the parts I can't yet see,
 the pair of chickadees, or whatever other kind of bird
 they might be, cheering me on,
 as they remain perched on the branches of the barren
 tree, blending in with the bark and the monochrome of
 this day,

Sky, white as Snow, the trees, calligraphic, as they
 stand on the shore, and I wonder whether their roots
 slither as deep as the River flows,
 only the first foot or so, sealed in ice, but below, Life
 still breathes,

the fish still swimming through the forest of weeds, I
 wonder whether they can hear my footsteps,
 the ice, too thick, muffling Life up here, as I inhale
 Air, sharp as knives, slicing straight through me,
 Wind propelling me to walk farther along the River,
 'till I reach the bend, pieces of it, floating, black, beneath
 an alabaster Sky,

my eyes drinking it in, before my feet turn back
 around, my journey along the frozen River, easier,
 walking back,

Wind clawing at my back instead of my cheeks,
 glancing at the spot where my feet left land, the spindly
 trees standing there,

the tiny grey birds fluttering into the Air, letting
 Wind carry their wings back to their nests,
 as I peer back down at the ice and the footsteps that
 came before me,

wondering whether they felt the same feeling of
 being free, as Wind whirls around me,
 my lungs, inhaling deep as the River flows, down
 there, in the blackness, hearts beating in the dark spaces
 between the weeds,

my feet approaching the flattened forest of reeds,
 where red-winged blackbirds used to sing, too many
 days to count 'till spring,

so I listen to Wind instead, battering their straw-
 coloured spines, wondering how chickadees survive the
 winter,

their hearts, trilling, as they fly beneath this bound-
 less Sky, returning to their nests to rest,
 and I wonder, as my feet reach land again, pausing at
 the spindly trees,

whether they hear each other's heartbeats through
 their blanket of feathers, as they curl into sleep,
 the River, still breathing, deep beneath its ceiling of
 ice, the earth's heartbeat slowing, cloaked in Snow,
 but still it's there, breathing Air, washed in the light
 of an alabaster Sky, cradling the white pebble of Sun.

Sylvie Kalenda

Saint paint

DEB REED

County Life Contributor

I love words, art and music. They feed each other. They're ways we connect. Gotta connect. We're helplessly hooked on baby's expression milestones. First eye contact. First true smile. First vocalizing of thought and emotion. *Every single emotion!* Yet even baby's noise effectively represents her attitudes or sensations. She needs to connect.

English scholar and poet of the early 1600s, John Donne, mused famously that No man is an island, Entire of itself. Long before Donne, thinkers were already recognizing the superpowers of community and connection. Humans truly belong together. Likeminded or different, solitary or sociable, it's our privilege and duty to express when and how we can. And perhaps exactly because others are equally motivated to voice their own aliveness which strongly beats even in the quietest of spirits.

In today's self-serving era of intolerance and rush, finding beauty is my comfort. I rely on it. I gravitate towards its broader thinkers, those creators with humility, humour and vision. I might not love all their words, art or music, but I still get to feel, say or adapt anything I might discover to my own stairway to wisdom. I get to witness creation itself.

Of creators who express artistic beauty (or their longing for it), I appreciate painters most. They seem divinely driven to translate their perceptions and sensitivity. We're also triggered to respond. Like a dance. From the spectrum of standout painters come my visual links to humanity. Historical, local or universal, I learn more about people. I like that. I recognize the open will of varied spirits to express human honesty through art. Open will AND courage, plus a near-irrepressible belief in self which, however their paintings are received, will inevitably connect someone to someone else.

Friends who paint are some of my closest. Those who must paint because their spirit commands it are the most interesting of all. Whatever compels them to choose sizes, colours, themes or moments enchants me. There's usually a game plan, but some remarkable paintings create themselves. Their brushes direct



Painting by Dagmar Boettcher. Note the fingerprint moon, casting a light over the winter scene.

them. Or leftover colour to use up. Time frames. Commissions. A teaching demo. Weather. Maybe the mood. Or music? Or just 'a happy accident'. It's pretty typical for painters to completely zone out while creating. It's kind of nice.

A friend generated this scene using only three colours. It developed after her abstract musing on winter and a random clutch of trees. She wasn't sure how to 'finish' her simple inspiration since she still had a dark lonely sky to address. She was getting blurry and restless, and impulsively dabbed a last-second fingertip, first onto palette, then, her canvas. And presto-chango! One ice-cold moon! This unplanned twist somehow sealed the accomplishment, revealed her spirit, and satisfied her original motive. She truthfully named this square acrylic FINGERPRINT MOON, and ultimately gifted it to enchanted me!

I appreciate painters. They're sometimes pos-

sessed by muse. They communicate that. They represent. Life is mostly about passion and beauty. The arts give them language.

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Youth Unlimited Gym Nights

When: Feb. 7 - Bubble Soccer 6:30 to 9 p.m.,
Mar. 7 - Sports and Dodgeball 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Apr. 4 - Sports and 9 Square 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Highlands Secondary School
For Grades 6-12. For more info contact haliburton@youthunlimitedkaw.com.

Minden Ice Races Schedule 2025

When: Feb. 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, and Mar. 1-2
Where: Minden Fairgrounds
Spectator admission is free. Races begin at 9 a.m. on Saturdays and 11 a.m. on Sundays.
Experience adrenaline-packed racing on a frozen track!

"Understanding Addictions:

How to give Support through Challenging Times"

When: Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.
Where: Schofield Room, Haliburton Legion, 719 Mountain St., Haliburton
You are invited to a discussion with community members of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, who will tell us some of their stories and about the 12-step path as a road to recovery. This is part of a continuing series on "Making our Communities Better Places", and will be opened with music by Rich Anton and Gord Kidd. Open to all, no admission charge, light refreshments provided. Hosted by the Baha'i community of Haliburton. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Recurring events

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly

When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of \$59

A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Bridge for Seniors

When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome

Haliburton Legion Walking Group

When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes

When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.

Where: Haliburton Legion, Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchrew

When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Seniors Chair Exercises

When: Thursdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St.
Safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

MINDEN COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE

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Annual General Meeting

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Local photographer recognized on international stage

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

We repeatedly hear about the importance of disconnecting from the online world, but in reality, it's nearly impossible to do.

The world is fast-paced these days; a swirling buzz of colour and motion that never seems to let us off the spinning ride.

Exploring the natural world around us - particularly in a place like Haliburton County - takes effort, dedication, and a certain spark of passion.

And that's what Dana McMullen has set out to do.

The world-class photographer currently resides in Eagle Lake, with his photos circulating around the globe. From 2016 until 2019, he was a *National Geographic* contributing photographer, with multiple images published 12 different times. He's been featured in the Smithsonian, the Laguna Gallery of Contemporary Art, and the Forest and Ocean Gallery, which is an Ansel Adams licensed gallery.

He's currently featured at the Wolf-Subzero Designer Gallery in Downtown Toronto, and the Algonquin Arts Centre.

He's travelled the world; taken in the beauty of the natural cracks and crevices scattering the surfaces. "But I wasn't really connecting to nature," he reflected.

As we sat in his cozy Eagle Lake home, his life's word adorning the walls, we took a step back through his journey, of how he got to where he is today.

"12 years ago, I was going through a massive change in my life," he said. "So I got on a plane, I flew to Denver. And the idea was that I needed to connect with people, and I needed to connect with nature."

While McMullen navigated the National Parks, he realized that he's been so busy, so caught up in the moment of capturing that shot, of snapping that second, that he just didn't enjoy it.

"I think I have a better opportunity to capture the magic, when I'm not on the dime of a client," he shared.

Originally hailing from the Waterloo region, McMullen studied graphic design with a minor in photography at Sheridan College. His original passion was design work, with photography often placed on the backburner. Yet when he started work with a global firm, who presented a project to shoot National Parks across the United States, McMullen jumped at the opportunity. "It's a passion," he said, in reference to grabbing those shots, "it's the thrill of the chase."

In 2015, McMullen and his wife, Rose, left their careers with the global firm in the States, and started their own



McMullen's most recent winning image, which won the top prize for the Canadian Wildlife Federation's contest, *Reflections of Nature*. /photo submitted

design and communications firm, EvergreenCSD. The couple works with clients across North America to bring images and stories to life, and while McMullen enjoys the people and the work, he recognized his own personal need to reconnect with nature.

After taking years off from submitting work to photography contests, McMullen dove back in this past year. And his efforts paid off.

He won one gold, one silver, and four bronze awards from the International Pano Awards in 2024, the largest international competition dedicated to panoramic photography around the globe.

Most recently, he won the top prize for the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Reflections of Nature photo contest. "The winning, runner-up, and honourable mentions of this year's photo contest highlight the best of Canada's landscapes, wildlife, and flora. They also capture how Canadians connect with nature, and how wildlife weaves itself into our urban environments,"

shared the website.

The best part? McMullen took all of his award-winning photos during his time off. As he says, that's when the magic happens. When he's feeling connected. When he's one with his natural surroundings.

For his winning shot with the Canadian Wildlife Federation, he had tried for days to capture that moment. The textures, the layers, the depth. It was never quite lining up.

Until it did. "It was such a brief ten minutes of light," he reflected. "That was all I had. And it was that one moment that may never happen again."

McMullen looks forward to what's next for him; both professionally and personally, as he explores his world with a new outlook, a new drive. "I want to say yes to everything," he said. "I am not sure I'll ever totally shut off, but I am going to try. To have those moments where I feel so connected to what's happening right in front of me."

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid euchre 1 p.m.
Cornhole 7 p.m. (upstairs)
Ladies darts 7:30 p.m. (downstairs)
Tuesday: Coffee and chat 9 to 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday: Coffee and chat 9 to 10:30 a.m. Mixed darts 7:30 p.m. Canteen opens at 6 p.m.
Thursday: General meeting (3rd week) Members only 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Chair yoga 10 a.m. Bingo, doors open at 5 p.m. Supper special every week. Canteen opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Meat draw 5 p.m. Canteen opens at 3 p.m.
Sunday: Ladies Auxiliary meeting (members only) third Sunday every month at 2 p.m.
We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you.

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo starts at 7 p.m. First Wed of each month - \$1000 jackpot, rest will be a \$500 jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information

Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out:

705-286-4541. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce
Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 2 to 6 p.m., Thursday: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 9 p.m.
Mondays - 10, 17, 24 - Darts \$5/player - 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - Feb. 12, 19, 26 Darts \$4/player, 2 p.m.
Thursdays - Feb. 13, 20, 27 - Cornhole \$5/player, 7 p.m.
Fridays - Feb 21 -Fish n Chips, 5 to 8 p.m. \$15
Feb. 14 - Valentine's Day Dinner -Chicken Marsala with salad, mashed potatoes, veggies and dessert. \$20, 5 to 8 p.m.
Feb. 14, 28 Seniors 55+ Lunch, \$17, Non
Saturdays - Feb. 15, 22 Meat Draw, 3 p.m
Feb. 15 - Valentine's Day Dance, Food provided. 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Feb. 22 - Ken McFarlane Ice Fishing Derby. Weigh in is at 6 p.m.. Registration is \$20
Sunday, Feb. 9 -LA Breakfast, 9 to 11 a.m., \$10
Super Bowl Party - 4 p.m. Kick off is 6:30 p.m. \$5 cover. Party snacks. Call the Legion for more info 705-448-2221
Feb. 28 - Wings and Jam, \$15/lb, 5 to 8 p.m.

Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.



Turkey by Ray Kidon



Red Squirrel by Tammy Nash



Black Squirrel by Jill Moulton



Blue Jay by Tammy Nash



A deer by Jill Moulton



Pine Marten by Tammy Nash

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If you are interested in joining the HHHS team for the above position, please visit www.hhhs.ca/about/careers for more details.

540 COMING EVENTS

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www.mindentimes.ca

Call to enter - the Tour de Forest summer art tour is looking for a variety of participants in both studio and guest artists. Please download application form from haliburtontourdeforest.com. Deadline is February 16th, 2025. For more information contact Laurie at 705-754-0444 or TdeFjuring@gmail.com.





VS



Saturday, Feb. 8 - 4 p.m.



North York
Saturday, Feb. 15
4 p.m.



Lindsay
Monday, Feb. 17
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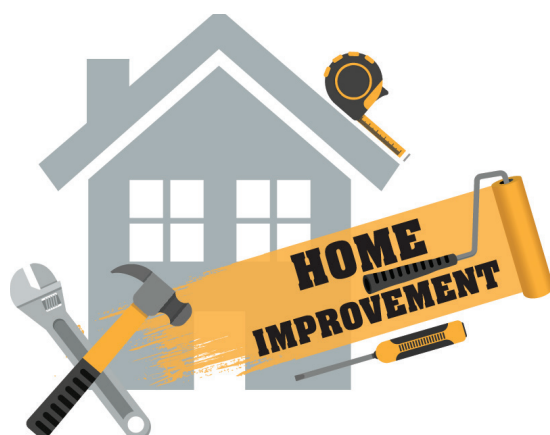
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INSIDE
THIS WEEK:

HOME FROM KABUL
Greg Forgrave gives his parents the best Christmas present ever

MIGHTY MIDGETS
Highland Storm does hometown proud in prestigious hockey competition

ROBIN SPOTTED
Christmas Bird Count includes unofficial sighting of robin on December 31



THE
ECHO
HALIBURTON COUNTY

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2007

VOL. 124 No. 2 \$1.25 INCL. GST

Fewer kids may lead to fewer teachers

JESSICA YOUNG
Staff Reporter

For the past few years, Archie Stouffer, Stuart Baker, J. Douglas Hodgson, Wilberforce and Cardiff elementary schools have noticed a three-to-four per cent drop in students and the secondary school will be feeling the effects this fall.

As a result of fewer children advancing through the grades, Haliburton Highlands Secondary School will notice a decline in Grade 9 student enrollment in September, possibly resulting in the loss of two teachers, says principal Gary Brohman.

"You never know about lay offs because there are teachers who take maternity leave or there will be some teachers who retire," Brohman says. "My hope is that nobody gets laid off, but with declining enrollment, that's a reality. Fewer kids means fewer teachers. We will probably lose two teachers next year."

Paul Doiron, superintendent of elementary and secondary school operations for Trillium Lakelands District School Board, is a bit more optimistic. "We probably don't have to lay off any teachers," he says.

Doiron sees the fall in numbers as a reflection of the declining birthrate in Ontario and the county's older population.

"In most of rural Ontario, there has been a decreased birth rate. It has significance when younger folks are having fewer children. We know our society is aging. We have more boomers reaching retirement age than young people in the

See **Young families** page 12



CASEY LESSARD/ECHO

Frosty the snow racer

Brayden Frost pushes his massive snowball into the lead in a race against his friends in the J Douglas Hodgson playground Monday. "Now that there's snow," Brayden said, "it's awesome because we got to do our annual snowball race." He and his friends were only able to have their race after about 10 cm of snow fell overnight. The snowfall was an answer to the prayers of many in the area whose businesses rely on traditional winter conditions for tourist dollars.

Snowbirds flock to MP's passport clinic

GREG HOEKSTRA
Staff Reporter

Well over 100 people turned out last week for a passport clinic hosted by local MP Barry Devolin – many in anticipation of looming travel restrictions slated to take effect two weeks from today.

As of January 23, any Canadian hoping to fly to the United States will require a passport. What's more, within two years' time, the same requirements will be extended to those crossing the border by both land and sea.

Devolin says the new requirements, which are part of a larger American initiative to prevent terrorism, have prompted more Canadians than ever to

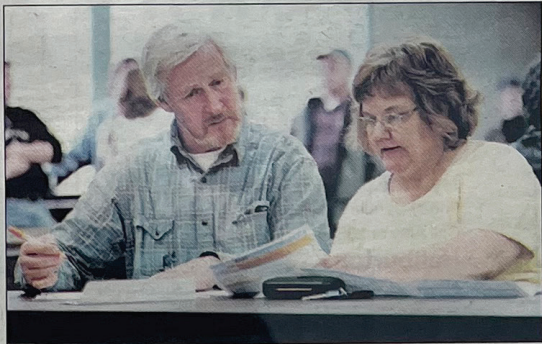
apply for a passport, which has created delays and setbacks in Passport Canada offices.

"They're running more than double their normal rate, and the line ups at some passport offices are hours long," he says.

Deborah Flood, who brought her 17-year-old son Brad to Thursday's clinic to apply for his first passport, says the U.S. regulations were the sole factor that drove her to visit last week's clinic.

"We don't travel there often but Brad's father lives down there so we need to be able to get back and forth just in case," she says.

Richard Burns of Haliburton has had a passport before but he too agrees that, at this point, his only reason for needing a passport will be in case he



GREG HOEKSTRA/ECHO

It's estimated that more than 100 people, including Jack and Loretta Billings of Gooderham, turned out last Thursday for a passport clinic in anticipation of new rules for entering the U.S.

decides to venture south of the border.

"I just thought I might be doing a little travelling to the

States soon," says Burns, following the principle that it's

See **Heavy demand** page 5

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